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ABSTRACT

To develop and implement diversity initiatives in the university community requires the effective implementation of initiatives in many areas. Diversity leaders should be cognizant of institutional values and attitudes and the vision espoused by the university's president. The diversity leader should inform the university community about opportunities to diversify the workforce. Diversifying the student population will require effective student recruitment and retention, financial resources to assist economically marginal students, an environment that welcomes students, and proactive student services to respond to diversity issues emerging on campus. Diversity initiatives should strive for intellectual diversity that includes other kinds of diversities--cultural, racial, gender, sexual, social, and economic. Multicultural activities should be integrated within the institutional calendar of student activities that celebrate commonalities as well as cultural patterns. Diversity leaders also need to mobilize minority staff and faculty organizations to provide guidance and resources. They must assess the corporate culture of their institutions to determine strengths and weaknesses and then find specific niches that can be used to build support. Several recommendations are offered for developing support for diversity and reducing faculty resistance. (JDD)

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Leadership, Diversity and the Campus Community

JAIME CHAHIN

When I think about diversity, I recall a letter that the late Tomas Rivera, Chancellor of the University of California at Riverside, sent to the community. He stated "that in order to have access, it is necessary not only to demand, but more importantly to lead and to become passionately involved in the processes. Trusting, demanding, leading, and involvement are all natural corollaries for improvement, progress, and strength in the development our community. (Lattin, Hinojosa, Keller 1988).

The close examination of effective campuses reflect strong leaders passionately involved in defining the values of their institutional communities. Community being a place which expresses continuity and values where the whole is more than the sum of each of its parts. (Hines 1980)

The complexity of the current institutional climates require a framework that provides a broad perspective for the development and integration of relevant diversity initiatives in the university community. In addition, diversity leaders have to be cognizant of the institutional values and attitudes and the vision expoused by the president.

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To achieve this, you need to include diversity as an integral component of your strategic plan. You also need to insure the university community is as informed to the existing opportunities to diversify the workforce and enhance the campus environment. Furthermore, the leadership also needs to be prepared to debate supply and demand issues and other egalitarian arguments that sometimes impede the success of the diversity initiatives.

One of the most pressing issues is the redirection of financial resources during the current financial retrenchment climate. Financial resources are critical when dealing with economically marginal students, who might require the redirection of resources and services. Secondly, institutions need to have a very serious commitment as to how they are going to diversify their faculty, administration, and curriculum in a competitive market where institutions are responding to new needs.

In regard to students, the constant goal is having a campus community embracing diversity by creating an environment that welcomes students and has the ability and resources to respond to diversity issues emerging on campus. This has to be demonstrated with proactive student services

that involve the student community and reflect diversity.

Effective student recruitment and retention is another major institutional concern requiring the collaborative efforts of different administrative and academic units of the institution. The other part of the equation is that retention initiatives should not include only federal programs, but should constitute integral components of all student services, i.e., student employment, mentoring, counseling, advising, financial aid, extra-curricular, etc.

In terms of creating more pluralistic campuses, we need to assess what approaches and assumptions are being used in organizations to carry out diversity initiatives. The literature (Kim 1991, Palmer 1989) mentions five approaches that have evolved with the concept of diversity. These include the golden rule approach, the idea of treating each individual with civility; assimilation approach which calls for shaping people to the style already dominant in the organization; righting the wrongs is addressing the historical injustices that have systematically disenfranchised members of specific groups and placed them at a disadvantage; culture specific approach is used to prepare employees for international assignments by

teaching them norms and practices of another culture; and finally, the multicultural approach that takes into account not just gender and ethnic groups, but also groups based on attributes such as nationality, professional discipline, ada status, and cognitive style. This approach is also discussed by José Ortega y Gasset (1944 "Mission of the University") when he presents one of the Missions of the University "General Culture" to mean active engagement of ideas and issues involving classical problems of justice, the good society and the responsibilities of citizenship.

The explicit goal of a multicultural approach is to strengthen the organization by leveraging a host of significant differences. According to roosevelt tomas' (1991 "Beyond Race and Gender"), valuing diversity is important, but you need to recognize the need to manage it to ensure the core culture and systems of the organizations are changed. Even though the academy in many ways is a privileged sanctuary, it also provides the opportunity to constantly examine and debate competing propositions to create a dialogue that will help us reach a better understanding of the truth. The opportunity for discourse needs to be constantly nurtured at different levels (i.e., student, faculty, administration) within the university community.

The key to a successful forum in our university campuses is having intellectual diversity that includes other kinds of diversities - - cultural, racial, gender, sexual, social, and economic . . . etc., That affect the completeness of the understanding and enhance the debate. These forums should also be complimented by the curriculum initiatives involving women, gender, and ethnic minority issues that re-examine the old paradigms concerning the transmission of a cultural heritage in a multicultural society. Institutional sponsorship of multicultural forums can help transform conflict into cultural renewal and understanding of the things valued as a university community and gain a better understanding about the american identity.

Likewise, student activities have to reflect the diversity of the student body and our society. We need to provide opportunities for leadership within the minority student community to evolve and involve by providing them with opportunities to organize, define agendas, and celebrate their achievements. We need to go beyond hispanic or black history month and integrate multi-cultural activities within the institutional calendar of student activities that celebrate cultural patterns and processes as well as our commonalities as human beings. As the campus student body

diversifies and students become more involved, student activities will begin to embrace and reflect the diversity of the institution.

When diversity is clearly defined within the mission of the institution, then it is imperative for each division to integrate a diversity strategy that defines initiatives, timetables, and resources allocated to the task.

In mobilizing the different constituencies on campus, we need to know "why do we want to change and what are the incentives?" Even though there is plenty of data (Workforce 2000, Hudson Institute) to document the demographic shift and the future composition of the workforce, institutions have a tendency to respond to political representation and the changing market. Several states in the southwest have minority students representing 30% to 40% of the population of school children. (Morrison 1992)

Minority staff and faculty organizations on campus can also be mobilized to serve as a catalyst to provide guidance and leadership for the administration as diversity plans are developed to implement multicultural activities. The creation and development of minority organizations on campus might also create tension when an institution is unresponsive. Adversarial

relationships are created in the campus community when there is no proactive agenda to include different groups and campus organizations in the development of institutional initiatives.

Minority faculty are a critical resource, but if you are going to retain them, do not over extend them in committee work, because you could actually be compromising their retention. Senior minority faculty are critical as a support group for the Jr. faculty and should be involved accordingly.

Ultimately, institutions listen and react because institutions have to maintain their competitive position within the communities they serve. In addition, in the current and near future their funding sources and political representatives will play a critical role in defining public policy issues and funding for higher education.

Politically, African American mayors represent 26 cities with more than 50,000 population. Women make up more than 30% of the state legislators in Arizona, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Washington. Latino elected officials have doubled in number between 1975-1990 in Texas, New Mexico, California, Colorado, and Arizona. It is, indeed, the aforementioned political reality that creates a sense of urgency more than a demographic shift or marketplace changes. Thus, institutional leaders

have to assess the corporate culture of their institutions to determine strengths and weaknesses and then find specific niches that can be used to built support within the institutions. Whether it is in your business school marketing department, your school of education teacher preparation program, or your theatre or journalism department, there is always a diversity niche that will strengthen the department, the students and the visibility of the school. The institutional leaders need to constantly parlay resources and create coalitions and partnerships built on the strengths of the institution and the communities they serve.

Minority advocacy groups within the campus (student, faculty or staff) should not only be used for advice, but to solicit resources to complement institutional resources. The experience and perspective of minority staff can be extremely valuable in understanding issues and gaining public support. In addition, departments within the institution will gain confidence when they collaborate with campus and community groups to leverage resources and enhance educational outcomes. The more you build campus coalitions between staff, faculty, and students, the greater sense of community and acceptance for diversity you achieve. The classic study by Donald Campbell

Pelez (1956) clearly documents that scientists who had frequent contact with colleagues different from them in terms of values and background were the highest performers.

Within the context of a changing U.S. population, there are a number of diversity initiatives taking place in private and public institutions of higher education. Yet even though there are compelling reasons to implement diversity initiatives, the road blocks are substantial and complex and it takes leadership with courage to bring about change.

University presidents in their leadership positions cannot avoid conflict or resistance from the faculty, but they can strengthen their organization by providing a vision that leverages differences to improve the dialogue of the university community. In order to develop support and reduce resistance from the faculty, I recommend the following actions:

1. Assess your institution's diversity problems. Do not just collect data, but survey attitudes and perceptions.
2. Make diversity an integral element of your institutional strategic plan.
3. Provide leadership for diversity by being responsive and taking action.

4. Develop solutions that fit the institutional needs and culture.
5. Identify solutions that provide institutional challenges, support for the faculty, and recognition.
6. Develop solutions that involve the faculty so they can be educated and informed and be part of the diversity solutions.
7. Provide data and implement the appropriate training systems to prepare personnel to engage in solutions.
8. Involve as many faculty and administrators as possible in the development of diversity initiatives.
9. Develop goals that can be achieved with measurable results.
10. Develop short and long term goals to insure you maintain institutional momentum for diversity initiatives.
11. Use institutional problems as opportunities to retire ineffective traditional institutional practices.
12. Leverage your institutional success to extend diversity beyond personnel issues, to include the communities you serve, the corporate sector, and alumni relationships.

Even with visionary leaders with good intentions, maintaining a rational discourse on diversity is difficult. Yet, we should recognize that we work within very democratic institutions (universities) that challenge us to find renewed meaning in the value of democracy, that should elevate the meaning of diversity to insure a continuing discourse.

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